



DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

Vol. 2, No. 3

Serving the men and women of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

July 22, 2005

Task Force White Devil troops help with recovery efforts

By **Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke**
Editor

KORINGAL VALLEY, Afghanistan- When a special operations helicopter was shot down June 28 in the Koringal Valley of Afghanistan, the recovery mission by special operations forces kicked in to high gear. With nearly impossible terrain and a high enemy presence in the area, conventional forces were called in to augment the fight.

Among those forces were 63 paratroopers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

"We were notified of the mission within 48 hours of the crash," said Capt. Jody Shouse, a Fayetteville, N.C., native and the commander of Co. C.

Once notified, C Co. paratroopers flew from Forward Operating Base Salerno and Gardez to Jalalabad Air Field. Less than a day later, the first troops from Co. C arrived at the mountain top overlooking the wreckage of the downed Chinook.

Their mission; to set up blocking positions to prevent those responsible from leaving the valley, assist special operations troops with the search for any survivors and hunting for any terrorists in the area, Shouse said.

The thickly wooded terrain and steep mountains were the troopers' biggest obstacles during the mission, according to Shouse.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Pfc. Jacob Shackelford, a Richmond, Ind., native and Spc. Thomas Schuster, a Denver, Col., native fire mortars during recovery operations following the June 28 crash of a Chinook helicopter in the Koringal Valley. Shackelford, Schuster and other paratroopers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, supported the special operations led recovery mission.

"The terrain is severely restricted, heavily vegetated, steep ascents and descents from 7,200 feet elevation up to around 10,000 feet," Shouse said.

The obstacles didn't stop Staff Sgt. Chad McKeown, a Los Angeles native, or his squad of paratroopers from

3rd Platoon.

"This was a lot of sweat, but definitely worth it," said McKeown. "It is an important mission to recover the remains."

Spc. Ross Erickson, a Warner, S.D., native and member of McKeown's

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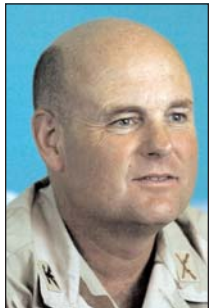
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July 22, 2005

Task Force Commander: We are winning

Col. Patrick J. Donahue

Commander, Combined Task Force Devil



Donahue

When you're on the 10 yard line with 10 seconds to go in a game of football and you have a 21 point lead it is easy to see that you are winning the game. But how do we tell when we are winning the war on terrorism here in Afghanistan?

The answer is simple. Look into the faces and eyes of the Afghan people as you extend your hand in friendship and you can see we are winning.

When we strike hard at the enemy, force them to relook their tactics and start trying something new, we're winning.

When the ANP and NDS start bringing in caches with over 1,000 107mm rockets and arresting Taliban leaders after your coaching but on their own, we're winning

When the last brick, in an elementary school the Coalition is rebuilding is placed and the doors reopen to local boys and girls so they can learn how to reshape their own destiny, we are winning.

When an eight-year old child walks up to a coalition checkpoint and urges a soldier to follow them to where an improvised explosive device is hidden, we are winning.

When our combat field hospital doctors and nurses work tirelessly through the night to save the life of a six-year-old boy with a congenital heart disease, we are winning.

When over 250 thousand Afghans registered to vote in our AO despite threats to the voting process, we are winning.

Everywhere you look we can see the reshaping and rebuilding of a proud Afghanistan that has been torn apart by war for over 30 years.

CSM and I are proud to be here for our follow on tours in Afghanistan with the Devils because we see incredible improvements that have come to be thanks to the hard work of the Coalition and Afghan people. We are making a difference for the people of this

proud land.

Our Coalition forces are working side by side with the Afghan people, fighting the enemy, training police, building roads, assisting the people with establishing a free election processes and ridding Afghanistan of their enemies who would otherwise oppress them.

We fully expect the enemy to do everything he can to derail these elections and he undoubtedly will have some successful attacks and kill and maim innocents. We are certain the Afghan people will be undeterred by any such ACM successes and will make their vote count in September's parliamentary elections.

Be vigilant, you have denied the enemy his normal activities and TTPs with your combat operations. They will seek new and desperate measures to attack both you and the Afghan people.

As the Commander and CSM of Regional Command East, we want to pass our thanks to all of you who make up this great team. You are making a difference and we are winning this war on terrorism.

Devil Voices: Where in the world would you rather be?



Pfc. Alejandra Ortiz

"I'd rather be in Cancun, Mexico chilling on the beach with my friends."



Sgt. Charles R. Lane

"I'd rather be in the Adirondack Mountains with my wife and kids eating at 'The Buffalo Head' restaurant."



Capt. Jason E. Hansa

"I'd rather be at Rigley Field with my wife because it's baseball season."



Chief Warrant Officer Rob W. Purdy

"I'd rather be in Ft. Indiantown Gap, Pa. in a nice bubble bath surrounded by candles in my own home."

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1-508 helps Afghans prep for elections

By **SpC. Laura E. Griffin**
Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - With election time drawing near, soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment drove to the towns of Zerok and Naka, Afghanistan, to check on the voter registration sites July 12.

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas J. Holland, 3rd Platoon Sergeant of Company A, said that many improvements have been made since the last visit.

"The mayor from each town is in charge of making sure that there are registration sites for both male and female voters," he said. "There has to be 10 armed guards - called arboqai - with AK-47s and three magazines each to ensure the security of the facilities. There also has to be one district elections field coordinator with a satellite phone and a hilux pickup truck for each facility. This time both of the towns met the standard,



SpC. Laura E. Griffin

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas J. Holland, 3rd Platoon Sergeant of Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, speaks with residents of Zerok, Afghanistan at the female voter registration center there July 12. The female registration center is located in the bottom half of a Zerok resident's home on the outskirts of town.

which was not the case during the last visit."

Besides checking on the sites, Holland was also there to hand out armbands to the arboqai and take pictures of

the elections officials for identification cards.

"The armbands are to help identify the arboqai as elections workers and so they can get paid when the elec-

tions are over," said Holland. "When the elections are finished, they turn the armbands back in to Afghan gov-

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Red Falcons arrive at BAF

By **Pfc. Mike Pryor**
82nd Airborne Division PAO

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN - The first Paratroopers from a battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division rapidly deployed to Afghanistan to bolster security in advance of the country's upcoming provincial elections began arriving here early Sunday morning.

Approximately 700 Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment are scheduled to arrive in Afghanistan over the next few days. They will join more than 1,500 Paratroopers from the 82nd's 1st Brigade Combat Team who have already been operating in the country since April.



Pfc. Mike Pryor

Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division walk across the tarmac moments after landing at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan July 16.

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Informant turns in cache to Soldiers

By Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assitant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - Sixteen 81mm mortar rounds and one recoilless rifle round were found in a cache near the city of Orgun, Afghanistan July 12.

First Lt. Ryan A. Canady, 3rd Platoon Leader of Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, found out about the cache that morning while preparing to drive to the town of Zerok, Afghanistan.

"An informant told us about it that morning and led us to the location of the cache," Canady said. "This is a really good thing because the residents here are realizing that helping the coalition is going to be productive for them."

Staff Sgt. Peter G. Lentz, 1st Squad Leader of 3rd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, said the find was really fortunate.

"Most caches we find are old or just not there," he said. "This was the first cache my platoon has checked out that was legitimate."

When the cache was found, steps were taken to ensure the safety of removing and transporting the rounds.

"First we took pictures of the site and checked to make sure that the cache was not booby-trapped," said Lentz. "Then we looked for signs of the age of the cache, counted the rounds and wrote down the lot numbers on them so that we could track them back to their source."

After the rounds were secured and prepared for transport, they were given to the local Afghan National Police chief to deliver back to FOB Orgun-E where they were examined further.

"Of the 16 mortar rounds found, eight of them were still safely usable in mortar tubes," said Canady. "The unusable rounds were given to the explosive ordinance detachment for disposal and the usable rounds were given to the Afghan National Army."

Getting these rounds out of the hands of anti-coalition militants and being able to use some of the recovered rounds as ammunition against the ACM is a great step in defeating them.

"The ACM know that they're not safe," said Lentz. "A lot of stuff is being turned in against them because more and more Afghans are for us. Having this cache in our possession feels good; that's less rounds to worry about being shot at us."

This cache makes the second turned in in the Orgun area in the last month.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Pfc. Devin A. Conkling, a forward observer with 3rd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment looks over sixteen 88mm mortar rounds that were captured July 12 near the town of Orgun, Afghanistan. The cache was turned in by an informant.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

1st Lt. Ryan A. Canady, 3rd Platoon Leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, checks a cache of sixteen 88mm mortar rounds and one recoilless rifle round for booby-traps July 12 near the town of Orgun, Afghanistan.

864th CE build Orgun-E road

Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assistant Editor

ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - A new road is under construction that will link the cities of Orgun-E, Afghanistan and Sharana, where it can link up to the ring road system - the major trade roads in Afghanistan that form a loop by connecting major cities.

Engineers from Company B, 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) and 391st Higher Headquarters Company Engineers started the project on Tuesday and are expected to finish the 64-kilometer road some time around December 15.

The current road linking the two cities more resembles a series of trails, which makes travel difficult and slow for the "jingle trucks" that carry supplies and goods in the area.

Capt. Burlin L. Emery, Bravo Company Commander, drove the route in early June to do an initial survey for the road's path.

"It reminded me of Baha racing," said Emery. "It was a wide-open valley with cars going everywhere. The one place that it did get down to one path was horrible. We busted a tire going through the river and had to turn around and backtrack several times just to find a passable route."

Cutting through the rocky terrain to make the road is not easy either. The heavy earthmoving equipment is in constant need of repair and maintenance.

Sgt. 1st Class Susan K. Peniston, a motor sergeant in Bravo Company, is in charge of ensuring those repairs get done.

"The repairs and maintenance are kind of hard to keep up with," said Peniston. "The rocks cut the tires and mud gets in everything. (Tuesday) we went through two tires and (Wednesday) we went through another two. Tires are our main problem here. We have 50 tires on stock for each piece of equipment, and that won't even last us through this whole project."

Staff Sgt. Richard D. Davenport, a construction equipment mechanic with Bravo Company, says that dust kicked up by the work also wreaks havoc on the equipment.

"We also have a lot of fuel problems with all the dust and sand that gets into the fuel system," he said.

First Sgt. Eugene Russell, Bravo Company's First Sergeant, says that these sorts of problems are all just part of the job.

"We'll go through a lot of grader tires and blades, but that's anticipated," he said. "As engineers, we come here to improve the quality of life for the soldiers and commerce for the Afghans. If it will help the local commerce and build allies, it will be good for us and for the nation as a whole."

Lt. Col. Alberto C. Rosende, Task Force Wildcat Commander, says that so far,

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Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Sgt. Jason E. Herzog, a construction equipment repairman with 391st Higher Headquarters Company Engineers trims a plug that he used to repair a blown tire on a grader that was doing road construction just outside of Orgun-E, Afghanistan July 6. The road construction is being done by soldiers from the 391st Higher Headquarters Company Engineers and Company B, 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy).

We have lift-off...

Spc. Jordan Rhodes, 313th Military Intelligence Battalion, launches a tactical unmaned aerial vehicle from the top of a police station June 28, while supporting operations of 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment (Airborne).



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

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progress on the project has been swift, despite the problems.

"The 64 kilometers of road are broken up into smaller chunks of about seven kilometers each for security reasons," he said. "Five of the first seven kilometers are already almost done, and it's only been two days."

"Orgun-E is a major hub in this area and is on a main trade route from Pakistan," continued Rosende. "We want to ensure that we can connect Orgun-E to Sharana so that these goods can get to the ring road. Cities in Afghanistan didn't grow up by the rivers, they grew up because they were on the ring road or connected to it."

Rosende also hopes that the

construction process itself will help to get some money flowing into the area by hiring local residents to do some of the work and by buying necessary construction supplies from them.

"For now the road will just be an improved gravel road because asphalt is not readily available here, which makes it cost prohibitive for us," said Rosende. "USAID is planning to pave it some time in the future, we are just doing the initial work."

The estimated cost of the project is between one and two million dollars, but that could be lower depending on availability of natural resources from "borrow pits"- deposits of gravel and sand usually found in riverbeds that are free for use in the construction.

For Pvt. 1st Class Jean-Paul M. Pelletier, a heavy

equipment operator with Bravo Company, this project offers an opportunity to perfect his skills as a grader operator.

"So far I've worked on over

900 meters of the road," he said. "It's a learning experience for me because this is something we don't do back in the rear."



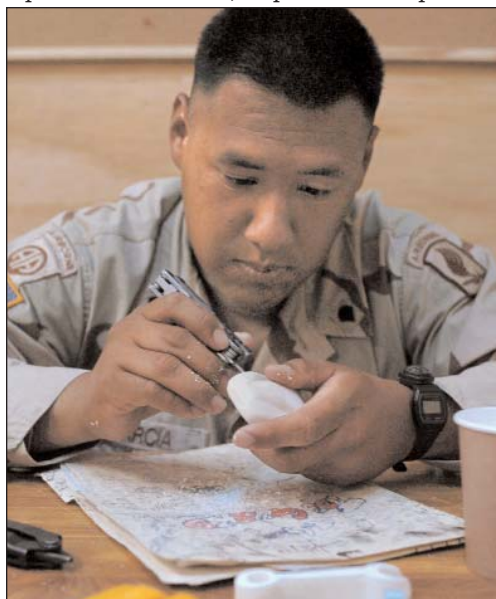
Spc. Laura E. Griffin

A grader works on smoothening a road just outside of the city of Orgun-E, Afghanistan July 6. The construction is being done by soldiers from the 391st Higher Headquarters Company Engineers and Company B, 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy).

Soldier's habit hardly 'dirty'

Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan- When you ask a soldier what his or her hobby is, the most common response is usually something like watching movies, playing video games or working out. But if you ask Spc. Cesar Garcia, a petroleum specialist



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Spc. Cesar Garcia, a petroleum specialist with 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, works on carving a tree frog out of soap.

ist with 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, what his hobby is, you might just be a bit surprised.

"I started doing soap carvings during my first deployment to Afghanistan in July, 2002," Garcia said. "It all started out as a prank with my squad leader. He put shaving cream in my helmet, so I carved his bar of soap into a (certain piece of male anatomy)."

That was just the beginning of a major past time for Garcia. He continued to carve bars of soap throughout the remainder of his deployment and continued through his deployment to Iraq and now this deployment to Afghanistan, although the subject matter has changed considerably.

"On my first deployment, I only had time to carve about 20 bars," Garcia recalled. "In Iraq, I carved about 120 bars. I'm on number 30 now for this deployment."

Using a leatherman and a mechanical pencil, Garcia can create anything from humvees to tool sets to gargoyles to various sea creatures and everything in between. He's even done a carving of Donald Duck with the name "Serenity" under it for Chief Warrant Officer Al G. Hoffman, a battalion maintenance officer for Task Force Fury.

"The carving is for my daughter, Serenity," said Hoffman. "I'll give it to her when I go home on leave."

"I think what he's doing is very artis-



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

A collection of soap carvings sits in the Task Force Fury Command Sergeant Major's office.

tic," Hoffman said. "He really touches people with his carvings."

Garcia gets a lot of his soap from the Red Cross, which donates bars of soap for the soldiers to use.

"I take those bars and carve them into things and give them away as gifts," said Garcia. "Other soldiers send them home to their families."

The time it takes Garcia to finish a carving depends on the subject of the carving.

"A tree frog can take up to eight hours to finish, but a human figure can take 18 hours," said Garcia. "Humvees are easy, they take only an hour."

Garcia gets many requests for his carvings. He currently has three requests in the queue.

Gunny greases the Marine machine

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

JALALABAD, Afghanistan- When Gunny speaks, things start happening.

"I look at my job as running the day-to-day operation, to free the commander to plan the strategic battle," said Gunnery Sgt. Oscar Jordan of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. "If something needs to get done the commander doesn't have to worry about it after telling me."

Getting the just arrived air-conditioning units in place, Gunny directs the soldiers with a loud clear voice to squat and lift straight up on the count of three.

"Get your backs straight!" Jordan shouts.

Also there's details with supply, chow, and security as just a sampling of his scope of responsibility.

An Afghan worker once needed a letter of recommendation from working on base and approached Jordan. With the help of an interpreter, Jordan spoke and joked with

worker. There was a second of concern on the worker's face that was soon replaced by a smile of understanding that it was a joke.

Afghanistan is Jordan's fifth major deployment in his 16-and-a-half years in the Corp. Also are deployments to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and operations in Somalia and Panama.

Jordan has served as an instructor teaching forces security, and close-quarters combat.

At the end of this typically long day, Jordan removed his Kevlar. It was dark and after sunset, yet beads of sweat rolled from his temples. There was a meeting with the provincial governor he attended, on an emergency situation. Villagers on an island in the middle of a swollen river were in danger of drowning. He did a site reconnaissance and went back to ready the Marines for the operation. The evacuation had gone well, and now in a private moment, he paused for a breather.

When push comes to shove, where the rubber meets the road; that's where Jordan is, in the midst of it all, getting it done.



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Gunnery Sgt. Oscar Jordan of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment speaks to a worker in Jalalabad.

Interpereting a family affair at Salerno

Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Just like many American parents who watch their sons and daughters serving in the armed forces pack up and go to war, Afghan parents of interpreters watch as their sons and daughters risk their lives to serve with the coalition forces in order to ensure their country's freedom.

Qais (pronounced "Kice") is an interpreter for Lt. Col. Tom Donovan, Battalion Commander for 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. His older brother, Wais (pronounced "Wice") Alimi, is the interpreter for the Joint Contracting Office here.

In January of last year, some soldiers were patrolling in the Alimis' hometown, said Qais. His cousin had a satellite antenna on his roof and the soldiers stopped to inspect it to make sure that it was not a communication satellite.

"The terps, in a very gentle way, asked my cousin's grandmother if they could go inside to check the antenna connection with the T.V.," said Qais, who lived about 200 meters from the home.

The cousin ran over to get Qais and Wais because he knew that they spoke English.

"At the time, me and my older brother were teaching English at the English Institute in Khowst," said Qais.

Seeing that the satellite was connected to a television inside the house, the soldiers decided that they didn't need to investigate any further. The Alimis invited the soldiers to have some tea and sat and talked with them for the next 30 minutes. They agreed to let the soldiers know if there was any suspicious activity starting to happen in the village.

"You guys are our guests in Afghanistan and we will help you," Qais told them.

"After about two weeks, we came here to visit the inter-

preter to see if he needed anything from downtown Khowst or if there was anything that we could do for him," said Qais. "We were not here to pass any information."

"When Gul, the interpreter we had come to see, came to the gate, he just said, 'Hello, I know why you guys are here,'" said Qais. "He just grabbed my hand and took me in."

Gul brought Qais to the hiring office where he was interviewed for a job.

"When he was done he said, 'O.K., you're a terp,'" said Qais. "'How?!? I have my students and my classes; there are all of these problems. Even my mom doesn't know, my father doesn't know. I haven't decided.'" Qais explained.

"They told me, 'Just come in, try it out and work here'" Qais recalled. "If you like it, please continue. If not, you can always quit and go back. Nobody is going to force you to work here." I said, 'OK, that is a good idea.' That was January 7, 2004. I have been

here ever since."

Wais' hiring experience was a little less dramatic than his younger brother's.

"My brother found out that the contracting office needed a terp, so he took me to Salerno for an interview," said Wais. "After passing the process, I got the job. That was about six months ago."

Qais went out on his first mission just a few days after he was hired. It was called Operation Blizzard and lasted about 15 days. The mission was to search the houses in the Khowst - Gardez pass area for people who were putting improvised explosive devices on the road and who were ambushing the "jingle trucks" that were bringing supplies in to Salerno.

"The first 3 or 4 days were really hard for me because back then my English was not all that good," remembered Qais. "I didn't know some of the slang and some guys were speaking very fast. I couldn't understand what they were

See "Terps" page 8

Former instructor leads former students

By Sgt. Robert M. Storm

2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine
Regiment PAO

Everyone knows that the United States Marine Corps is a small organization; in particular those who serve as instructors can discover the Marine Corps can be very small indeed. While many of us wish for the chance to train our Marines from the 'ground up' one School of Infantry Instructor got his chance.

Sgt. Oscar A. Rauda, infantry squad leader, from Santa Cruz, Calif. just finished a three-year tour in March as a combat

instructor at the Infantry Training Battalion, SOI, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. During his tour Rauda was Battalion Instructor of the Year. After his tour, he reported to Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment located on Marine Corps Base Hawaii and was surprised to discover seven out of the ten Marines in his squad were his former students.

"It was a great experience being an instructor, but it is even more rewarding when you get to train the Marines and then serve with them in a com-

See "Rauda" page 9



Sgt. Robert M. Storm

Sgt. Oscar A. Rauda, lower left, with his squad of infantrymen. Rauda trained most of the Marines in his squad in boot camp.

Terps

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talking about, so that was very, very hard for me. But the guys I was working with were very good guys, they were helping me a lot and showing me some new words, so after a few days, I became more fluent."

Wais felt pretty much the same when he first started working in the contracting office. His job is to go to the gate to meet with contractors and teach them how to fill out the contracting bid forms.

"The most difficult part of my job was in the beginning," said Wais. "I didn't know some of the construction words, I didn't know engineering words, electrical words, and all that stuff. Being a contracting office terp, you have to know all of these words, so I had a hard time."

Both of the brothers' bosses feel that they have come a long way since they first started here and are invaluable resources for accomplishing their missions.

"Qais is an excellent speaker, his English is very good," said Donovan, who has been working with Qais since he took over command of 2-504 in May. "He also advises us on Afghan culture. This helps to keep us from upsetting the local population. He is very enthusiastic about the future of Afghanistan."

"Wais is one of the best interpreters, you teach him something once and he remembers it," said Senior Master Sgt. Ben A. Seitz, Superintendent of the Joint Contracting Office, who has been working with Wais for the last two months. "Contracting is a whole different world. If it weren't for him, we wouldn't be able to talk to the contracting base. Our job lets us reach out to the vendors who don't

speak English so that they can share in the wealth and help build the local economy."

Life for the Alimi brothers before becoming interpreters was not always easy, said Qais. When they were younger, their family moved from Kabul to Khowst to get away from the Mujahadeen. After a year and a half their father, who is a doctor, moved the family to Peshawar, Pakistan so the children could get a better education. That is where Qais and Wais learned to speak English.

When the Taliban took over control of Afghanistan, the Alimis moved back to Khowst in hopes of starting over.

"We didn't know who these Taliban people were," said Qais. "My father was hoping that maybe they would be good for the country. After he opened a clinic, my father heard that the Taliban were killing people like him, he left the country and went to Russia then moved from Russia to Germany then from Germany to Holland."

The Taliban reign of terror was not meant to last forever, and as every Afghan will tell you, 9/11 was felt all the way around the world.

"I was here in Khowst listening to my radio when 9/11 happened," said Qais. "It was a live broadcast and I could hear everything that was going on. At first, we didn't know who did this, then they said that it was the Taliban. I thought to myself, 'So, the Taliban touched the elephant's (butt), now the elephant is going to come kick them back.'"

That elephant did in fact come kick the Taliban and the people in the Alimis' neighborhood are thankful for it.

"All of the people in our neighborhood and all of my family are so glad about the

Americans being here and that I am working with them because they are seeing how the coalition forces are here helping Afghans," said Qais. "Even the Mullah thinks it is a good idea. It's a part of our religion to help other Muslims. . He said that through doing this job, I can educate the Americans on our culture and teach them what religious and cultural things need to be respected."

Qais wants to take his job one step further, he wants to join the U.S. Army as a linguist.

"Nowadays I know about the culture, about the people, and how to work with them because of my experience with the Army," said Qais. "I want to see the states, I want to go there, I want to be their citizen."

Wais on the other hand is happier here in his homeland.

"I think I would like to visit the U.S., but not to stay," Wais said. "It seems to me too busy. I like it here. This is where my family is."

Qais and Wais live with the other interpreters in the "terp tent," but they go home to visit their families often. They are encouraged by the changes that they are seeing in their country.

"Life is getting better and better here because of the Americans," said Qais. "If you get outside of Khowst city and see the little towns and villages, you will see signs of development there. Life is changing very quickly here now. During the Taliban, a lot of educated people left the country and went to other foreign countries: Europe and America and others. And now because of the increased security, they are returning and they have all of these ideas of how to develop their own country and how to move them towards prosperity."

Falcons from page 3

"We are here to augment current forces on the ground to provide additional security for the national provincial elections," said Lt. Col. Dave Anders, the battalion's commander.

The added troops will allow Coalition forces to reinforce engaged areas without reducing offensive capability in other areas, said Combined/Joint Task Force-76 officials.

The battalion, known as the Red Falcons, will be operating throughout the coalition sector, Anders said. All the Paratroopers are prepared to conduct "full spectrum" operations, he said.

"If we are asked to do offensive operations, we are

prepared to do that. If it's stability operations, we can do that, too," he said.

This is the third rapid deployment of the 82nd's forces to provide election security within the last year. The division sent a battalion to Afghanistan last September before the Afghan presidential elections, and two battalions to Iraq in December for its national parliamentary elections. As a result of that history, this mission came as no surprise, Anders said.

"When you put on the maroon beret and the double-A patch of the 82nd Airborne Division, you know deployments go with the job," he said.

As they settled into their temporary hootches at Bagram Airfield,

Paratroopers like 1st Lt. Dan Coulter of Bernardsville, NJ, the battalion medical platoon leader, said they were excited about the mission and the chance to help democracy flourish in Afghanistan.

"This is different than typical combat missions because we'll get to see the difference we're making in people's lives firsthand," Coulter said.

"I'm hoping the elections go through so that the Afghani people can enjoy the same freedoms that we do," he added.

Although the 82nd has had units deployed to Afghanistan almost constantly since the beginning of the Global War on Terror in 2003, this is the Red Falcons' first time in the the-

ater. Yet squad leader Sgt Ernest Marsan of Fairfield, CT, said he had complete confidence in his fellow Paratroopers' ability to complete the mission successfully.

"We know our job and we've got a lot of seasoned veterans. When you know your job, you can go anywhere in the world and perform," Marsan said.

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Rauda from page 8

bat zone," said Rauda with a big grin, as he discussed his Marines. "I had a good feeling because I remembered them all, and so I knew the squad I was getting would be ready for the coming challenge."

Being an instructor at SOI had its own series of challenges, the hours were long and the job was stressful. Most of the instructors stood duty one to two times a week, so the Marine students were never left unattended during the entire two-month training cycle. The effort was required to teach the Marines the basics of infantry patrolling, land navigation, weapons systems, basic

survival skills and much more, preparing the Marines for further training when they reached their respective duty stations.

Most of the Marines from a class get split into several battalions and then further broken down into companies, which is why having so many students trained by one instructor end up serving together is unusual.

"At first I didn't believe my old instructor would be leading my squad. I knew it would be good because he had a lot of knowledge and experience, so it made me more comfortable," said Lance Cpl. Justin L. Monk, infantryman, from Stephenville, Texas. He adds with a sly grin, "we used to do impersonations of him behind his back, (in a deep gruff voice) 'Hey Devildog, when you get to

the fleet..."

The Marines of Rauda's squad consider themselves lucky to have a familiar face leading them. Most Marines do not recognize anybody in the units they are assigned to, so being led into combat by a familiar face is a relief.

"It was like being reunited with family; I couldn't believe it," said a laughing Lance Cpl. Dustin R. Epperly, infantryman, from Pierce City, Mo. "He always motivated me, he was notorious for smearing an entire tube of green paint on his head whenever we had to 'cammie up,' it made him look like a dang ninja turtle."

Rauda and his squad are currently serving in Afghanistan, in the Laghman Province in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Registration from page 3

ernment officials in Sharana to collect their pay."

To be fair to the residents, the registration sites must be accessible to everyone that lives in the area, but getting people who live in remote mountain villages can be a challenge. Each person who registers to vote has their picture taken and an identification card made.

"To get to the remoter sites, the DEFC, two arboqai and one photographer will travel to these places and run registration sites there," said Holland.

To accommodate their culture's tradition of segregating the males and females,

the male and female registration sites are set up in two different places in each of the towns. The male registration sites in both of the towns were set up at the district centers in the middle of the towns. For their privacy, the female registration sites were set up at the outskirts of the towns.

As one man in Zerok proved, this is not a sign of lack of enthusiasm for women voting.

"In Zerok, one guy gave up the entire bottom half of his house for the women's registration center," said Holland.

Mohammad Amin, the female field elections coordinator in Naka, said that his own wife, who registered to

vote this year, is very enthusiastic about getting the chance to vote.

"My wife wants to vote for a candidate who will work hard for peace and prosperity for all of the people of Afghanistan as well as for the local people," said Amin. "All of the women here are very excited to be able to vote."

"This is our first parliamentary elections in 25 years," he continued. "Last year, for the presidential elections, no one knew what elections were. This year they know and are very excited."

Holland has watched the people's excitement about the elections grow, despite the small amount of elections

education in the area.

"They've just picked up and run with this," he said. "We're trying to get more elections education going in these areas. The United Nations is helping to sponsor some elections education programs in the local schools by donating all of the necessary supplies, like tents, pencils and books, which the schools will get to keep after they give the classes."

The elections will be held Sept. 18 nationwide. Come Sept. 19, the first ever elected provincial council members and parliament members will take their place in helping to guide Afghanistan through this experiment called democracy.

Up Front & Centered: Life is nothing but a rat race

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

Every one of us has, at one time or another, worked with or for someone that was only fixated on achievement. That person was stuck in a rat race and probably wasn't a very happy person either. They would say or do anything to make themselves look better or achieve a certain goal.

That rat would probably tell the boss when someone was late to work so that they would appear more loyal to the company. They might even be your boss. You know the one who takes everyone's ideas and presents them as their own without giving the originator the proper credit.

Ken Blanchard, one of my favorite business sense authors, has co-authored a book called *Managing by Values* along with Michael O'Connor, and in it explains a process for improving work environments.

That process is called *Managing by Values (MBV)* and has three phases: gaining clarity, communicating effectively, and aligning practices.

If you don't know where you're going how do you know when you get there? Blanchard believes that the most important thing in life is to decide what is important. That means that you need

to get clarity if you want to manage by values.

Phase I, *Gaining Clarity*: In the sports world athletes talk about being in the 'zone' which is the same concept as clarity. The harder they try to win, the less likely they are to find their zone. In business many companies or individuals watch only their scoreboard (the bottom line). By making this their focus they take their eyes off the ball (their relationships with people). To be successful in business or life you need to keep both eyes fixed on the values you want to live and work by. That may not place the bottom line first.

Phase II, *Communicating Effectively*: Blanchard says, "Genuine success does not come from proclaiming our values but from consistently putting them into daily action." In other words you've got to 'walk the talk'. Some of that talk is nonverbal communication like 'symbols of inequality' such as executive parking spaces or executive washrooms. One step management can take to alleviate the feeling of inequality would be to refer to everyone in the organization as an 'associate' rather than by formal titles. "Real change doesn't happen until it happens inside people. It's a change not in what people see but what people see with", according to Blanchard, "communication isn't based

on agreement but on understanding."

Phase III, *Aligning Practices*: This third phase contends that being a company or individual whose values are aligned does not occur without changes in habits, practices, and attitudes. This phase is perhaps the hardest one because it requires people to take a hard look within themselves. How do you think people see you? Just imagine that your colleges gave you a nickname like "the angry little man." I would say that some readjustment to your attitude might be in order.

Just remember that without values we are nothing. Organizations don't make managing by values work, people do.

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Recovery

from page 1

squad echoed that motivation.

"It would be really nice if we could get all the guys (who were killed) back and get those who did it," Erickson said.

The paratrooper's perseverance paid off when another squad on patrol captured four suspicious men hiding behind a waterfall in a nearby valley. The four individuals were found with weapons and U.S. equipment that may have been taken from the wreckage of the helicopter. The stories of each person didn't match up and the decision was made to detain the men for further questioning.

Several days later a patrol found the remains of the final unaccounted for service member and C Co. wrapped up their operations in the area and headed back to their home bases.

However there was no rest for the weary troopers of C Co. Within hours of their return to FOB Salerno, the paratroopers were notified that they would be soon taking over the mission of border security at BCP Wrice along the Afghan-Pakistan border.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

The "warrior ethos" card of a Soldier killed in a Chinook crash June 28, near the Koringal Valley, Afghanistan. The card was found by a paratrooper of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, during the recovery mission.